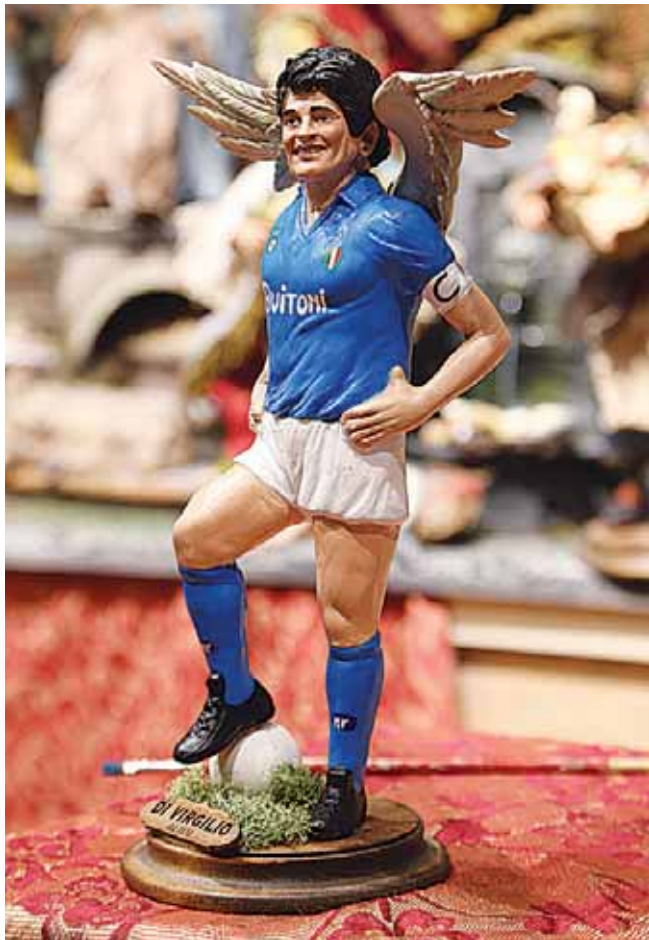


Sports

Maradona's death plunges

'Ciao Diego': Naples weeps for Maradona



NAPLES: Photo shows a statuette of Argentinean football legend Diego Maradona with wings, at the shop of Gennaro Di Virgilio in the San Gregorio Armeno street where shops traditionally sell Christmas Nativity statuettes, a day after the death of Maradona.



KOLKATA: Fans hold candles as they pay homage to late Argentinian football legend Diego Armando Maradona in Kolkata yesterday. —AFP photos



DOHA: In this file photo, Argentina's 1986 World Cup winning hero Diego Maradona wearing a traditional Arab headdress visits Al-Sadd club in Doha.



Buenos Aires: A fan mourns outside the Casa Rosada government house as he waits to pay tribute to Argentinean late football legend Diego Armando Maradona in Buenos Aires yesterday.

Buenos Aires: Fans worldwide paid tribute and Argentina was in mourning yesterday after Diego Maradona, one of the greatest footballers of all time, died aged 60 after years of drug and alcohol problems. Thousands of mourners, many in tears, and many wearing the World Cup winner's number 10 Argentina jersey, gathered in streets and at stadiums around Buenos Aires in a spontaneous celebration of the player and manager's riotous life.

Tributes poured in from around the world as supporters, players and government leaders from South America to Europe and Asia marked the passing of an undisputed maestro. The outrageously skilful Maradona, widely remembered for his "Hand of God" goal against England in the 1986 World Cup quarter-finals, died of a heart attack while recovering from surgery to remove a blood clot on his brain, a member of his entourage told AFP. Family members were summoned to Maradona's home north of Buenos Aires before his death was announced, triggering a wave of grief across the

country and worldwide.

Lionel Messi, Argentina's modern-day superstar, led the tributes as he said: "He has left us but he will never leave us because Diego is eternal." Brazilian legend Pele, 80, constantly compared with Maradona in the debate over football's greatest player, said he hoped they would one day "play together in the sky". Hundreds of people were already queuing outside the presidential palace in Buenos Aires when Maradona's coffin arrived late on Wednesday to lie in state during a three-day period of national mourning.

Despite major coronavirus problems in Argentina, with more than 1.3 million cases, fans gathered at landmarks including Buenos Aires' Obelisk monument and Argentinos Juniors' Diego Armando Maradona Stadium, where he started his career. Elsewhere, underlining Maradona's global appeal, Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan and Indian cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar were among those to offer tributes, and one fan held back tears as he spoke to AFP in Beijing.